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AUTHOR Sutton, Connie; Armfield, George W.
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ABSTRACT

Two papers concerning staff development for small/rural community colleges are presented. In the first, practices at small/rural colleges are contrasted with those at larger and more urban colleges. It is noted that (1) small colleges try to keep pace with institutional growth and development needs mostly in the area of curriculum, disregarding growth opportunities for staff personnel; (2) local governing boards or state legislators have not allocated funds solely for staff development; (3) most small/rural colleges have less defined organizational responsibilities for coordinating staff development; (4) because of their geographical isolation, most small, and especially rural college staff welcome and support staff development; and (5) staff programs are not always planned to meet developmental needs. Recommendations are offered for future effective staff renewal. The second paper relates the author's experiences in a staff development program at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute and provides a review of the literature. Outlined are literature supporting the need for staff development and suggestions for getting a program started. Ideas for effective programs include commitment by college administration, communication of clear objectives, use of flexible plans to meet changing needs, and securing financial support. (MB)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES

EFFECTIVE RENEWAL WITH LESS RESOURCES

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Two Papers

By

Connie Sutton

and

George W. (Bill) Armfield

JC 790 172

Papers presented at National Conference on Small/Rural Colleges (1st, Blacksburg, Virginia, August, 1978)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL/RURAL COMMUNTIY COLLEGES - EFFECTIVE RENEWAL WITH LESS RESOURCES

By

Connie Sutton

Paper presented at National Conference on Small/Rural Colleges (1st, Blacksburg, Virginia, August, 1978)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES -

EFFECTIVE RENEWAL WITH LESS RESOURCES

The focus for this presentation will be on selected observations about the state of the art of staff development at community colleges. This will be done by contrasting practices at small/rural community colleges with practices at larger and more urban community colleges. These observations will then be followed by several specific recommendations which, hopefully, should strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of staff development at small/rural community colleges.

The first area of contrast is with the definition of staff development. Generally, the current practice with larger, more urban institutions is to conceptualize staff development as a comprehensive program of professional growth activities for administrators, full-time faculty (and increasingly, part-timers), paraprofessionals, clerical and other support staff. A few of these institutions include trustees in professional growth activities. In general, staff development is defined as professional growth for <u>all</u> employees. Activities are often broad in scope and focus on personal and interpersonal growth as well as knowledge/skill development to increase professional competencies. These activities include team-building, improving intra- and inter-departmental communications/linkages, problem solving, conflict resolution, etc., as well as specific role related skill/knowledge development, i.e. writing behavioral objectives, test construction, alternative teaching methods, group counseling skills, assessing management style, etc.

The small/rural college is often involved in expansion, growth and development.

For these colleges, staff development tends to be more narrowly defined and program activities evolve in relationship to skills or competencies needed for program/course development. The broader view of professional growth activities for all personnel is not a prevalent concept at most small/rural colleges. One possible reason for these differing view points is that larger, urban colleges are frequently more developed. That is, growth and expansion is generally more stabilized and greater attention is placed on increasing organizational efficiency, and generating a more positive institutional climate or environment to insure high staff morale and productivity. In contrast, small/rural colleges are trying to keep pace with institutional growth and development needs and these are often in the area of curriculum (program and course offerings). Therefore, professional development relates directly to curriculum or program development which too frequently does not encompass growth opportunities for administrators, paraprofessionals, clerical and support staff.

A second area to examine is in funding and budgeting for support of staff development. Increasingly an area of concern for all two-year colleges is to have adequate funding to support rising operational costs while providing incentives or opportunities for professional growth and development. With a few exceptions, local governing boards or state legislators have not allocated funds solely for staff development. The scarcity of funds makes it difficult for any college to maintain a line item in the budget exclusively for staff development. If the trend of stabilized or decreased funding continues, in all probability expansion of staff devlopment efforts will become greatly curtailed. This will seriously threaten small/rural community colleges who express a need

to improve staff skills and competencies to meet growth and expansion needs. The state of the art for funding appears somewhat bleak for most community colleges regardless of size and location. It may be even bleaker for those who do not seek alternative funding to provide staff development for their employees.

A third area of focus is with organizational patterns for planning and implementing staff devlopment programs or activities (larger institutions tend to speak of a staff development program, while small/rural institutions tend to speak of staff development activities). For larger, urban community colleges, the prevalent organizational pattern is to either designate a person (full-time or part-time) or committee with responsibility for coordinating staff development where the planning and implementation process usually involves:

1) assessing needs and interest;
2) defining goals/objectives or areas of focus;
3) logistical planning, scheduling and implementation of activities;
4) approving or distributing funds to support planning activities; and
5) summative evaluation of staff devlopment efforts.

Most small/rural community colleges have less defined organizational responsibilities for coordinating staff development. In fact, staff development tends not to be carefully planned, but is left to the discretion or initiative of a dean or chairperson, and occasionally the chief executive. There is less opportunity for broad-based input and involvement in defining needs, setting goals/objectives and planning implementation activities. There is less definition of staff development program and more attention given to staff development

activities.

There is probably a direct correlation between funding support for staff development and the degree of institutional commitment for an organized, integrated program with clearly assigned coordinating responsibility. For the small/rural community college, resources tend to be invested in areas that directly impact students, i.e. additional teaching faculty, another counselor, etc. For them, funding a full-time or part-time staff development position or release time for a committee is often not a high institutional priority. Unless an administrotr sees staff development as part of his/her role and plans accordingly with other administrators, the small/rural college will continue to have a pot pourri of activities which may or may not result in the needed or desired outcome or impact.

The fourth area of contrast looks at who is motivated to participate in staff development. The issue of participation has been examined by many staff development practitioners and there is concern that staff who appear to need it less are often the most vigorous supporters and frequent participants. Since larger, more urban community colleges are frequently in closer proximity to graduate schools and workshop or seminar offerings, staff in these colleges often use these opportunities for professional growth and development. This is especially true if campus-based efforts do not have incentives or rewards for participation. There is less chance for full support of growth opportunities that are limited to campus-based activities unless these directly relate to salary or promotion. Staff development for the sake of continuous growth does not seem to be enough.

Although many staff in small/rural community colleges wear several "job hats" and usually have greater time constraints for accomplishing responsibilities, there is generally a very positive attitude, often an eagerness to learn or hear something "new or different" as it relates to improving job skills and performance. Because of their frequent geographic isolation from professional development opportunities, most staff in smaller, and especially rural colleges, seem to value, welcome and support staff development. Participation appears to emanate from an intrinsic value that is not necessarily tied to institutional monetary or status rewards.

The final area of focus is in the evaluation (outcomes and impact) or staff development programs or activities. Very little formative evaluation has been done to determine exactly what difference staff development has made. Institutions, whether large or small, urban or rural, that have meaningful processes for evaluating staff performance (a non-punitive approach) can measure outcomes and impact if these are initially defined in terms of needs and goals/objectives for improving performance. Unfortunately the majority of our community colleges do not have performance evaluation systems or processes which specify strengths and developmental needs. Therefore, staff development programs or activities are not always planned to meet developmental needs. Thus, it is difficult to measure the impact of institutional benefits for staff development expenditures. There is great need for <u>all</u> community colleges to measure and document the positive impact of staff development, if only to strengthen their capabilities to secure funding support in order to continue such programs or activities.

Too frequently, staff development is viewed as a "frill fringe benefit" by funding decision makers. Since we are in an era of stable or decreased funding, staff development support stands a chance of being eliminated or greatly curtailed. It would be unfortunate if this happened, for one strength of the community college has been its willingness to train, develop and improve staff competencies for better meeting the needs of its diverse students. The following recommendations are offered as possible strategies for future effective staff renewal with less resources:

1) Review the use of existing staff development funds. Determine how much is being spent and for what purpose. Document the impact or benefits of these expenditures.
2) Identify staff needs or interests in a systematic manner. Set specific staff development goals/objectives in order to plan an intergrated, coordinated institutional program of activities. Measure institutional outcomes in relationship to established needs, goals and objectives.
3) Define staff development broadly to include professional growth and development for each employee whose role or responsibilities impact student growth and learning. Be certain that staff development is viewed as a corollary to institutional development and is therefore a program of activities for the survival and growth of the institution.
4) Brainstorm creative strategies for motivating participation that are not tied to rewards or punishments. Seek to create an institutional climate where participation in staff development is valued as the professional right and responsibility of every employee.
5) Assign specific responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating staff development. Be willing to invest existing funds to train those with this responsibility.

6) Seek alternative funding sources. Explore grant support form private, state or federal agencies.

7) Read ERIC's Topical Paper #66 entitled Staff Development in the Community College: A Handbook. It is an excellent resource for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of staff development in any community college.

Note: The preceeding remarks are based on the presenter's observations from experiences as an internal staff development practitioner at Miami-Dade Community College and consultations at many community colleges which include the small/ rural community colleges that participate in the ACCTion Consortium (Student Development Center).

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES

EFFECTIVE RENEWAL WITH LESS RESOURCES

By

George W. (Bill) Armfield

Lenoir, N.C.

Paper presented at National Conference on Small/Rural Colleges (1st, Blacksburg, Virginia, August, 1978)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES

EFFECTIVE RENEWAL WITH LESS RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

It is indeed a pleasure to work with Connie Sutton this morning on a topic that is so important to the growth and success of our institutions. This paper will be limited to a discussion of those activities relating to staff development for the small/rural community colleges. The purposes are threefold: 1) to point out the need for staff development, 2) to suggest procedures used to begin a staff development program, and 3) to recognize a successful staff development program in which the author has been involved.

This presentation is based on the author's experiences in a staff development program at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, review of the literature as attached to this paper, and those words previously spoken at state, regional, and national meetings.

One can safely generalize that the quality of service in the community college depends primarily on the quality of the staff. An institution can enroll more and more students, employ a wider range of staff personnel, build larger and more attractive buildings, develop greater varieties of educational programs and service activities; however, all of this will not produce effective service activities; however, all of this will not produce effective service if the staff is not highly competent.

My review of literature found the rural two-year institution defined as follows:

1. Is out of the mainstream of innovative action and involvement.
2. Does not provide for more than a minimal level of programmatic diversification.
3. Due to its isolation, the institution has difficulty attracting personnel.
4. The supportive local tax base does not provide the institution with the level of financial support comparable to urban institutions.

As accountability appeared on the scene, institutions became more aware of their responsibilities in meeting the needs. This awareness focused attention on the need for a comprehensive program of staff development based on defined institutional goals.

NEED FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Much of the literature on staff development has dealt with why staff members need improving. Numerous reasons can be given, but only a few will be mentioned as follows:

1. Inadequate preparation of staff members due to a lack of pre-professional and pre-service programs offered by graduate studies.
2. Lack of staff development programs to correct the inadequacies.
3. Staff members are not prepared to cope with the needs of the "new" or "nontraditional" students.
4. The student clientele has become older requiring an emergence of new approaches to instruction.
5. A trend to taking the college into the community, factories, and prisons has redescribed the faculty role.

6. Acceptance by staff members that they have training needs and express willingness to participate in staff development.
7. Resistance of staff members to change attitudes and values.
8. Greater numbers of personnel from industry without prior teaching orientation.
9. Declining of faculty/staff mobility.
10. Increasing demand for accountability.

The expressed needs for staff development present a challenge to the small rural community colleges in providing services needed by their staff to do an effective job. Many institutions have already begun to take great strides in staff development. Others are just beginning to move in this direction. Wherever you are at this particular time, it will be valuable time spent to explore how to get started in a staff development program.

GETTING THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STARTED

According to Hammons and Wallace (1976, p. 138), 13 management questions and issues need to be considered prior to initiating a staff development program:

1. What answer can be given to staff who ask, "Why do we need a staff development program?"
2. Who will be responsible for doing the planning?
3. How will specific staff development needs be identified?
4. What is the balance between institutional priorities and individual needs?
5. Which staff should participate?
6. How flexible will the program be?
7. How can staff be motivated to participate?
8. How should the program be scheduled?
9. Who will conduct the program?

10. What instructional technique(s) work(s) best?

11. What publicity should be made of the program and how should the program be disseminated?

12. Should the program be evaluated, and if so, how?

13. How should the program be funded and what other kinds of support, besides funding, are needed?

We might ask ourselves how can a small institution with limited financial resources, small student population, small unspecialized staff, and a large, sparsely populated service area possibly achieve staff development? I maintain that all institutions possess the capability to provide staff development regardless of size.

We are not presumptive enough to tell you when you should start your own individual staff development program; that is a personal decision.

Staff development should be the responsibility of every administrator. This statement is the most prevalent view or approach practiced by most presidents. Since it is the customary way of doing things, it introduces no threat of change, involves no additional personnel, and its costs are low.

This concept often results in everyone's job becoming no one's responsibility. So often the administrative head of organizational segments have had little, if any, experience in staff development and in many cases will duplicate efforts and resources unless there is coordination at some management level.

Staff development is one component in a total program of institutional development. Its role must be one of assisting individuals of the college to seek ways of creating a more productive and satisfying working environment. The members of the college must have a sense of ownership in both the decisions for change and in the means for change.

Staff development does not have to be concerned just with problems. It can be concerned with doing things better. Staff development does not mean you are not competent in your position but to help innovate new ideas and assist you to become a better employee if you are interested.

The need for staff development is evident, but a commitment from the chief administrative officer is an absolute necessity to make it a reality. In order to do it, "you have to want to."

Who is to determine staff involvement? The question assumes responsibility for staff development resides with somebody or a group of people. No plan for staff development will get to first base if it is viewed as something imposed from the chief administrator.

Authority is usually delegated by the chief administrator to an individual or a committee for development of a plan. Committee appointments should represent all peer groups in the college: administration, faculty, student personnel, library (LRC), support, clerical, maintenance, and adult education. The appointment of an individual will definitely place responsibility on one person, result in possible budget amounts, and force results. The approach of using an individual can be quite effective when combined with an institutional committee.

One of the first things needed is to determine the content of staff development meetings. Hammons recommends any of the four following methods for determining content of staff development activities:

1. Ask the staff what their needs are.
    a. Circulate open-ended questionnaire.
    b. Ask the head of each administrative segment.
    c. Personnel visitation with the staff to identify areas of concern.
    d. Get everyone to look at themselves--self-evaluation of where they are now and where they wish to be in the future.

2. Specify the knowledge, skills, and abilities you desire in staff members and design a program to develop these.
3. Review the literature and base your program on what seems to be a consensus.
4. Leave it up to each division or department.

There is no magic formula or technique for conducting successful staff development programs; however, if a college-wide plan is to be effective, it must meet basic criteria. A few ideas are as follows:

1. A stated commitment by the board, president, and other administrative heads.
2. Acceptance of the need for staff development from all personnel, including the president.
3. The staff must have a significant role in planning, implementating, and evaluating the plan.
4. That institutional goals and objectives be defined and directly related to long range planning.
5. The plan must allow for individuality while meeting institutional goals.
6. Clear statements of objectives should be communicated to all segments of the college.
7. Participation by the staff should be on a voluntary basis.
8. Mutual trust must be established to further the intent of the plan.
9. Responsibility for the program should be assigned to a committee.
10. Committee should be made up of task-oriented personnel who want to get the job completed.
11. Chief administrtor should allow adequate time for the plan to emerge from a committee, be implemented, and evaluated.
12. Plan should be flexible to meet changeing needs.

13. Approach staff development in a positive manner: "Here is a workshop, would you like to attend?
14. Set aside one or two days at the beginning, end, or during each quarter/semester for programs.
15. Secure financial support.

The chief adminstrator must appraise the progress being made in the college program of staff development. At the end of a previously agreed time frame, the president may wish to determine the following:

1. The level of administrative commitment to the program.
2. The degree of acceptance established in the institution.
3. The extent to which resources will be allocated.
4. An assessment of the committee function and responsibilities.
5. The degree to which the chief administrator perceives need for staff development and allows changes to occur as a result of the program.

You may have noticed that funding or financial support was the last criteria mentioned for a successful staff development program. Many colleges are unwilling to budget dollars for maintenance of people. One of the biggest barriers that can get in your way is waiting for money. Unfortunately, colleges "lay down and die" when funds are not appropriated for staff development. There is no question that establishing staff development programs are severly diminished by lack of adequate funding; however, there are lots of acitivities you can do without money.

Among the full-time employees in state systems of community colleges, it is hard to accept that there is not enough expertise to build a hierarchy of meaningful experiences in staff development without always looking outside for highly paid consultants. Money is not really the immediate problem.

Convincing the board of trustees or state offices to approve funds for staff development is not easy. The sequence which several colleges have successfully used is to first determine needs and desires to participate, provide activities within budget or individual limitations, evaluate the results, inform appropriate parties of the results, and then ask for funds.

Funding for staff development has been provided through the following means:

1. state and/or local budgets.
2. grants and/or foundations.
3. tuition waivers
4. in-house arrangements--other staff members carry your load and you in turn cooperate when other staff do likewise
5. Out of your own pocket

The allocation or distribution of funds, once funding is approved, must be based on the decision about the assignment of responsibility for staff development. If the program is decentralized, the units should control the budget. On the other hand, if the program is centralized, the central unit should prepare and control the approved budget.

A SUCCESSFUL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

This writer would like to give credit to Beverly Hawkins for her assistance in pulling together the following information on the staff development program at Caldwell Community College and Technical Insitute.

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